Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently amended) A process of preparing a composite comprised of at least one elastomer ~~which contains~~ and a dispersion therein of a functionalized carbon black wherein said process comprises blending a particulate, functionalized carbon black with

[[(A)]] an organic solvent solution of [[a]] at least one conjugated diene-based elastomer selected from at least one elastomer as a homopolymer of isoprene and/or 1,3-butadiene and elastomer as a copolymer of isoprene and/or 1,3-butadiene with styrene, followed by removing said solvent therefrom to recover said composite~~, or~~

~~(B) an aqueous emulsion of a styrene/butadiene copolymer elastomer followed by removing said water therefrom to recover said composite~~;

wherein said functionalized carbon black is a rubber reinforcing carbon black modified by having domains of at least one moiety on the surface thereof selected from

(A) silanol, siloxane, titanium oxide, titanium hydroxide, zirconium oxide, zirconium hydroxide and aluminum hydroxide groups;

(B) aryl polysulfide, alkyl polysulfide, thiol, thiophenol, epoxide, allyl and vinyl groups; and

(C) dibenzyldisulfide, ditolydisulfide, bis(propyl)disulfide, bis(propyl)tetrasulfide, n-propyl thiol, n-butyl thiol, orthomethylthiophenol, n-propyl epoxide, n-butyl epoxide, methyl allyl, propyl allyl, methyl vinyl and propyl vinyl groups;

wherein said ~~domains on the surface of said functionalized carbon black optionally also contain at least one of silanol and siloxane groups~~ composite is thereafter blended with an amorphous precipitated silica and reinforcing carbon black.

2. (Currently amended) The process of claim 1 wherein said ~~composite is prepared adding said functionalized carbon black as a dispersion thereof in an organic solvent to an organic solvent solution of elastomer wherein said domains on the surface of said~~

~~functionalized carbon black are exclusive of silanol and siloxane groups~~ organic solvent solution of at least one conjugated diene-based elastomer is composed of two individual organic solutions of elastomers, wherein:

(A) said organic solvent solutions of elastomers are pre-blended prior to addition of said functionalized carbon black, or

(B) at least one of said organic solvent solutions of elastomers is blended with at least one of said organic solvent solutions of elastomers subsequent to said functionalized carbon black addition, or

(C) at least one of said organic solvent solutions of elastomers is blended with at least one of said additional organic solvent solutions of elastomers substantially simultaneously with said functionalized carbon black.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently amended) The process of claim 2 wherein said solvent ~~solution of said elastomer is a polymerizate~~ solutions of said elastomers are polymerizates wherein at least one of the polymerizates is a living polymerizate in which the polymerization has not been terminated so that that the polymer of the living polymerizate may interact with the functionalized carbon black filler.

5. (Currently amended) A composite ~~is provided which is~~ comprised of an elastomer with a dispersion therein of a functionalized carbon black prepared by the method of claim [[1]] 4.

6. (Currently amended) The ~~composite of claim 5 which contains an additional reinforcing filler selected from at least one of carbon black and amorphous precipitated silica~~ process of claim 1 wherein said subsequently blended reinforcing carbon black is an unpelletized carbon black having an apparent density in a range of from about 3 to about 140 g/l.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Cancelled)

25. (New) The process of claim 2 wherein said organic solvent solutions of elastomers are pre-blended prior to addition of said functionalized carbon black.

26. (New) The process of claim 2 wherein one of said organic solvent solutions of elastomers is blended with the other said organic solvent solutions of elastomers subsequent to said functionalized carbon black addition.

27. (New) The process of claim 2 wherein one of said organic solvent solution of

elastomers is blended with the other said organic solvent solution of elastomers substantially simultaneously with said functionalized carbon black.

28. (New) The process of claim 1 wherein said amorphous precipitated silica is pre-treated prior to blending with said composite by reacting said amorphous precipitated silica with a bis(3-ethoxysilylpropyl) polysulfide having an average of from 2 to 2.6, or from 3.5 to 4, connecting sulfur atoms in its polysulfidic bridge.